



PERSONAL COMPUTER MUSEUM

CANADA'S VIDEOGAME MUSEUM

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Icon



UNISYS

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Release Date:	12/1/1984
Manufacturer:	Unisys
Original Retail Price:	\$2,500.00
Adjusted Inflation Price:	\$5,745.38*

The Icon was a computer system used in the schools of Ontario, Canada in the mid 1980's. It ran the QNX operating system and used a file server. This machine is important for historical reasons for personal computers in general but more specifically for Canada as well.

It turns out that Northwest Fur Trader, one of the more popular educational titles for the system was written by [one of our volunteers!](#).

This computer is currently interactive in the Museum.

User Comments

Adam Coe on Sunday, December 10, 2017

AMAZING...please tell me it has all the software on it...IPaint, Offshore Fishing, Day In The Life, Math Maze...so many good ones.

Ean Bowman on Wednesday, April 19, 2017

I grew up with these things in my classrooms. Could you be so kind as to post high-resolution photos of the motherboard? For both the Icon and the Lexicon? Can you carefully archive the software? I would like to make an effort to emulate this system for posterity. I think quite a few Canadians were peeved to learn our government threw out these \$2500 apiece machines altogether. It would be nice to be able to relive a bit of history and ensure the memories stay alive.

Carl Tessier on Sunday, May 8, 2016

Oh, this is awesome. My elementary school in Quebec had a computer lab full of networked ICON workstations hooked to a LexICON file server. Years later, I remembered going in this lab and playing various games and using a paint program, but I had no recollection of what this obscure system was, except that it probably ran some flavour of UNIX. It took me almost twenty years to figure out what exactly these computers were and I'm glad this museum has one on display! It's definitely a great piece of Canadian computing history.

Ryan on Sunday, February 14, 2016

Emulator! I would love to play Build-a-bird again! I appreciate what you guys are doing. Looking forward to visiting the museum.

matthew on Tuesday, March 3, 2015

Is there any way I can even find pictures of the offshore fishing game? someone please email me pictures of this game metallic29@hotmail.com Or even better an emulator.. i havent played this game in 28 years!!!

Gerold on Friday, January 9, 2015

Any news on a emulator for this computer? Please!! Get it on kickstarter! We really want to play offshore fishing, peggies way home/peggies potluck (or what ever It was called) robot r&d etc..

Jon on Saturday, August 23, 2014

I guess I am showing my age, but I remember the first year these things hit highschool and there were none of the programs the other posters are mentioning available. I learned to program in C instead since there was nothing else to really do.

Don on Thursday, January 23, 2014

I definately remember using the ICON in my highschool in the 80's....I was so happy when we upgraded from the awful brown key model(that wasn't very balanced and never worked properly) to the new white keys with the pagewhite monitor. My favorite game was definately the chemistry simulator..you could blow things up a thousand ways LOL. And the kicker...they were produced at Microtel ...just 3 blocks away from my current home.

Bob on Sunday, October 6, 2013

The best game on these computers by far was "Spin the trackball as fast as you can" Robot R&D was pretty cool too, I miss these computers :)

MP on Wednesday, May 29, 2013

The Unisys Icon brings back lots of memories of my elementary grade school (Late 1980s or even early 90s). After school, a group of us would play such games as "Keep it Runnin' Rally", Robot R&D, Northwest Fur Trade, and Offshore Fishing. If anyone actually caught a shark, I would love to know. I hope you are able to keep the Icon up and running where I would be able to show my son when he's old enough to understand it. I hope to visit soon and am looking forward to it as I do live nearby. Keep up the good work!

Maury Markowitz on Sunday, April 14, 2013

I recall one of the most popular displays at the Science Center during the 1980s was a forest fire simulation. I believe this *may* have been running on the PDP-11, but that machine was not particularly powerful so I'm not sure if that was the host. So, does anyone know this program? And was it ever ported to the ICON? It seems the ICON would have been the perfect platform for it.

Roy Goostrey on Friday, March 1, 2013

We were one of the first school in Ontario to work with the prototype. The drafting department field tested the CAD Tutor software. I subsequently wrote a book, published by McGraw Hill, entitled "Step by step through the CAD Tutor" Would you like a copy of the book to go with the computer?

Gerold on Monday, December 10, 2012

Man o Man the memories with that trackball. I can still hear it spinning like its gonna fly right out of the keyboard. And that bloody net kept breaking in offshore fishing when trying to get those crabs and lobsters. I really really need to play those games again. Please make an emulator for them!!! GREAT WEBSITE. I wanna visit you guys some time.

Scott Bennett on Thursday, November 29, 2012

Found out from wiki that the animated paint program I mentioned was called: IPaint Ergonomics Lab @ University of Toronto: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/IPaint

Lonemonk on Friday, November 2, 2012

In the mid-80's our computer lab had I think a full compliment (16 terminals to 1 Lexicon). My favourite program was a line drawing program that you could animate, by deleting some bits of the picture and redrawing them (Sort of like Line Rider today). Myself and other students spent hours making these ersatz animations using this technique. I'd love to know the name of the application, and whether that was built-in or something developed locally. Line Rider: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Line_Rider

Michael Evans on Wednesday, November 10, 2010

I used the Burroughs ICON (original one with dark brown keys) in high school, back in 1987. I remember I

managed to bypass security and get read/write access everybody's account - including the teacher's! I also wrote a game for it that was very popular. Only later I found out why it was popular - it was the only game on the server.

RL on Monday, October 11, 2010

The Action buttons at the upper corners of the keyboard were classic. One of my favourite game was 'Refugees in the Wilderness.' I wonder if there's a copy of that game still in existence.

Julian Dunn on Thursday, August 26, 2010

This is really esoteric but I remember rooting the ICON in high school by compiling a simple C program. There was a serious flaw in QNX's implementation of `exec()` that would let you specify a parent PID to inherit privileges from. Selecting process 1 (`/sbin/init`) as that parent, and `"/bin/sh"` as the program to `exec()` got you a root shell. The teachers weren't impressed, naturally.

Alain Siodlowski on Tuesday, July 13, 2010

I remember back in high school using the original Burroughs Icon and later the Unisys version, Icon 2. Learned Pascal on it and thinking: "What ! no line numbers ? How can you write a computer program without line number ?"

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* Inflation data courtesy of www.inflationdata.com. Values are approximate using our own calculations.